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ABSTRACT

The immediate future will probably be a time of austerity for graduate education and will demand strong leadership from the graduate deans. Several developments will characterize that period: (1) an overreaction to the Ph.D. glut, such that graduate programs will be indiscriminately condemned for producing unemployables; (2) the shift of emphasis to undergraduate education, so that graduate schools will have to stage an orderly retreat; (3) a softening of the departmental structure with the shift to undergraduate education; and (4) with the growing popularity of systems analysis, greater pressure to justify programs, especially in the natural sciences, where there are large research components. During this time of retrenchment only those deans with a charismatic personality will be able to survive. (AF)

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THE POSITION OF THE GRADUATE DEAN IN TIMES OF AN AUSTERITY BUDGET*

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DR. R. E. PORRECO: First of all, I apologize for bringing up a topic which has been discussed at countless meetings of graduate deans and which is a constantly recurring theme of like motif in the literature of graduate education.

It has been raised at this Conference by several speakers in several different ways.

I also apologize to several of my colleagues here who have patiently listened to my passionate and pessimistic discourses on this topic.

I want to make it clear that I am fully aware of the existence of happy graduate deans, those who are fully satisfied that they have all the power or authority they need to carry out the responsibilities of their position.

I also wish to say that you should not infer that I am an unhappy dean. My president was himself a graduate dean for many years and has written most

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perceptibly and with great insight about the structure of the graduate school within the university, and the necessity of having the kind of model that gives the graduate dean the authority necessary to carry out his responsibilities.

I wish also to make it clear that I do not argue that there should be graduate deans in every university or that those who be should endure. Certainly graduate deans are not indispensable to graduate education, and the Council of Graduate Schools itself may indeed pass out of existence before the end of this decade.

I speak attentively and inquiringly and about those institutions which now have graduate schools and graduate deans who have been given the primary responsibility of maintaining and improving the quality of graduate education.

In these institutions, the dean has been described as a lonely figure faced, on one side, by a number of vice presidents and undergraduate deans and on the other by the departmental chairmen and their baronies. It has been pointed out that there is only one--usually only one graduate dean in an institution. Often being a floater in the table of organization and lacking statutes

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which clearly describe his position, and without authority, faculty or budget, he has had to operate "either through the influence of his charismatic personality and intellectual distinction or simply by patience and low cunning,"--(laughter)--or so says the literature of graduate education.

Unfortunately many new graduate deans believe this.

At the other end of the spectrum, some who have seen the growing strength of the departments and recognize the anomalous position of the graduate dean have recommended that he become variously a vice president, a vice provost, vice chancellor, or what have you.

Whatever the solution to this may be, I feel that it will be different for each university. I think that it is most necessary for us to reflect on the special problems that the kind of dean I have described will face in a period of austerity.

I think there is little doubt but that the immediate future which we have heard described at this meeting somewhat pessimistically will call for strong leadership from the graduate deans. I suppose the principle is that in good times we can get along with weak

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graduate deans, but that to try to do so in bad times has special dangers, as well as opportunities, of course.

Some of the developments and tendencies that I see arising or already present in connection with this austerity situation are, one: An overreaction to the Ph.D. pinch or glut or whatever it is, such that graduate programs are being indiscriminately condemned for producing unemployables.

Two: The development of university budget committees without decanel and with little faculty participation.

Three: As more emphasis is placed on undergraduate education, graduate schools will be hard pressed to hold their own or, what may be in better order, to stage an orderly retreat.

Four: The departmental structure which is or has been the basis of graduate education as it now exists is softened by increasing emphasis on undergraduate schools and their programs.

Five: As officers of institutional research develop and become more sophisticated and more emphasis is placed on systems analysis and cost accounting, there will be more pressures on graduate schools to

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justify programs, especially in the natural sciences, of course, where there are large research components.

As signs of these things to come and things which are already here, we have all heard the complaints of undergraduate students that they are paying the cost of graduate education and being cheated in the process. We have heard the criticisms, sometimes within our own institutions, that our faculty does not do enough teaching and spends much of their time in useless research.

I predict that we will hear these criticisms more and more.

We are in a time when retrenchment is obviously necessary. And being a kind of retreat, it is much more difficult than building and attacking.

Hopefully, as graduate deans, we will be able to assist in this retrenchment and to heal some of the wounds that it will cause. In order to do this, however, our position will have to be strengthened, and I think it inevitably will.

Let us hope that we will not, however, be drawn to the bosom of the higher administration as hatchet men, but as experts who know about graduate education in our institutions and can best give it the greater

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flexibility and new directions that it will most surely need.

If this hope is not to be realized, then I predict that the dean without a charismatic personality will not survive.